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Extreme temperatures on the rise

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Daily temperature extremes have risen by up to 4 °C over the last 50 years, say climate experts from the Met Office Hadley Centre.

Research published this month in the Journal of Geophysical Research explored how observed extreme daily minimum and maximum temperatures, across different world regions, have changed since 1950.

Minimum temperatures have seen the biggest increases, most notably over Russia and Canada, where the coldest days are now up to 4 °C warmer than they were in the middle of the 20th Century.

The largest changes in maximum temperature were found across Canada and Eurasia where they have typically warmed by 1-3 °C. Warming across the UK was found to be between 0.5 and 2 °C.

Simon Brown, Met Office Climate Scientist said: "This latest research shows that some extreme events are already increasing. The trend is set to continue with our changing climate having a significant impact, with warmer nights and hotter days in the future".

The Met Office is working with many different sectors to explore the impacts of climate change. Warmer nights and hotter days will have wide ranging impacts from heatwaves, such as the one that affected Europe in 2003, to changes in crop growing seasons.

Notes:

- The Met Office Hadley Centre is the UK's foremost centre for climate change research. Partly funded by Defra (the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) and the Ministry of Defence.
- The 2003 European summer heatwave caused between 22,000 and 35,000 heat-related deaths and approaching €13.1 billion in agricultural losses.

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